

Message Text

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SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IN BURUNDI

REF: A-14 OF FEBRUARY 28, 1975 AND STATE 014917

1. AS REQUESTED REFTTEL, THE FOLLOWING IS THE INTRTS
QUESTION IN BURUNDI.

2. INTRODUCTION: SINCE THE EMBASSY HAS NEVER IN THE PAST
ADDRESSED EXCLUSIVELY THE HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTION IN ASSESSING
U.S. POLICY TOWARD BURUNDI, WE HAVE SOUGHT TO PROVIDE
CONSIDERABLE BACKGROUND HISTORY BOTH TO REFRESH OUR OWN
MEMORIES AND, HOPEFULL, TO OBIATE THE NECESSITY FOR READERS
TO PLOW BACK THROUGH THE CONSIDERABLE FILES OF 1972, THE PERIOD
THAT PROVOKED THE MOST DEBATE CONCERNING OUR POLICY DECISIONS.

3. WE HAVE ALSO WANTED TO BE HONEST IN OUR ASSESSMENT, AND IN
BEING HONEST, WE HAVE FOUND LITTLE THAT IS POSITIVE TO SAY ABOUT
THE PAST ORPRESENT HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN BURUNDI. HOWEVER,
TO PROVIDE A BALANCED PERSPECTIVE, THE RECENT HISTORY DOES SHOW
THE PEOPLE OF BURUNDI IN THE TRAGIC GRIP OF ELEMENTAL EMONTIONAL
FORCES BEYOND ANYONE'S CONTROL. ABSTRACT IDEAS OF DEMOCRATIZATION
AND MASS PARTICIPATION RUN UP AGAINST THE INSTINCTS OF A BELEAGUERED
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MINORITY FOR LITERAL SELF-PRESERVATION. IN THE COURSE OF THE LONG
STRUGGLE, MISTAKES AND FOUL DEEDS OCCUR ON ALL SIDES. AND THE

IMPACT ON BURUNDI POLITICS OF THE ANALOGOUS DRAMA BETWEEN HUTUS AND TUTSIS BEING PLAYED OUT IN NEIGHBORING RWANDA, WHERE THE VICTORIOUS HUTU TIDE ENGULFED THE TUTSIS, CAN NEVER BE OVERLOOKED. IT IS ALL TOO EASY FOR OUTSIDERS TO PASS SCATHING MORAL JUDGMENTS ON THE RULING TUTSIS AND MUCH TOO DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO CONTRIBUTE TO CONSTRUCTIVE SOLUTIONS AND ETHNIC RECONCILIATION.

4. WE HAVE NOT CLASSIFIED OUR REPORT TO PROTECT THE BURUNDI GOVERNMENT FROM CRITICISM, BUT WE DO BELIEVE THAT THE FULL PUBLICATION OF WHAT WE HAVE WRITTEN WOULD NEGATE THE APPROACH OF QUIET DIPLOMACY WITH THE BURUNDI GOVERNMENT WHICH STILL, ALONG WITH AN UPSURGE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THAT CAN OPEN UP NEW HORIZONS FOR ALL ELEMENTS OF THE POPULATION, SEEMS TO HOLD THE BEST PROMISE FOR FUTURE CHANGE IN THE DESIRABLE DIRECTION. IN ADDITION, SINCE BURUNDI IS NOT THE ONLY FOREIGN NATION WITH SERIOUS HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS, IT WILL HAVE TO BE THE DEPARTMENT WHICH ESTABLISHES SOME SORT OF OVERALL CRITERION FOR THE PRESENTATION OF INFORMATION TO THE CONGRESS ABOUT TROUBLESOME CASES. THUS, THE CLASSIFICATION OF "CONFIDENTIAL" WILL SERVE TO PRESERVE THE PRIVACY OF SENSITIVE JUDGMENTS BY ONE SOVEREIGN STATE ABOUT THE INTERNAL SITUATION IN ANOTHER, UNTIL THE DEPARTMENT CAN ESTABLISH SOME STANDARDS OF WORLDWIDE UNIFORMITY ON THESE DISCLOSURES.

5. SUMMARY: A HEIGHTENED CONSCIOUSNESS OF SEPARATE ETHNIC IDENTITIES THAT CAME WITH SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS, PARTICULARLY AFTER INDEPENDENCE IN 1972, COUPLED WITH FEARFUL TUTSI MEMORIES OF THE VIOLENT HUTU TAKEOVER FROM TUTSIS IN NEIGHBORING RWANDA HAVE PRODUCED A TRAGIC AND ALMOST INTRACTABLE ETHNIC SPLIT BETWEEN BURUNDI'S RULING 14 PERCENT TUTSI MINORITY AND THE OPPRESSED 85 PERCENT. AFTER THE MASSIVE SLAUGHTER BY THE TUTSI REGIME OF THE HUTU "INTELLIGENTSIA" IN 1972, WHICH FOLLOWED AN ATTEMPTED HUTU COUP, HAVE COME A SUBSEQUENT STRENGTHENING OF ALL-TUTSI MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT AND A MAJOR IMPROVEMENT OF BURUNDI'S RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. THE LATTER DEVELOPMENT HAS ALMOST ENDED THE CHANCES OF REBEL ACTIVITY INCITED FROM AMONG HUTU REFUGEE GROUPS ABROAD, AND A PERIOD OF STABILITY, IN THE SENSE OF THE MAINTENANCE OF LAW AND ORDER, IS MOST LIKELY FOR THE MEDIUM CONFIDENTIAL

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TERM (5 TO 15 YEAR) FUTURE IN BURUNDI.

6. THE BURNING QUESTION REMAINS OF HOW THE COUNTRY CAN GO ABOUT HEALING THE TERRIBLE INTERNAL WOUNDS OF ITS POST INDEPENDENCE HISTORY AND CAN ASSURE THAT THE FRUITS OF FUTURE PROGRESS BECOME AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE, REGARDLESS OF ETHNIC GROUP--WHICH IS CERTAINLY NOT THE CASE TODAY. FURTHERMORE, WHAT ROLE CAN THE U.S. PLAY, PARTICULARLY IN A COUNTRY WHERE THERE HAVE NOT BEEN ANY STRATEGIC OR ECONOMIC AMERICAN INTERESTS AND VIRTUALLY NO

AMERICAN LEVERAGE WITH ITS LEADERS?

7. THERE IS NO PANACEA AND CERTAINLY NO PRECISE FORMULA IS IN SIGHT FOR CONVINCING EACH ETHNIC GROUP THAT ITS LONG TERM PROSPERITY AND, IN THE CASE OF THE TUTSIS, SURVIVAL DEPEND ON RECONCILIATION AND JOINT COOPERATION. UNFORTUNATELY SINCE 1972, THE FOCUS OF THE TUTSI RULERS HAS NOT BEEN ON RESORING SOCIAL JUSTICE, BUT ON MAXIMIZING THEIR POWER. THERE HAS BEEN ONLY THE BRIEFEST LIP SERVICE TO HUMAN, CIVIL, AND JUDICIAL RIGHTS, WHILE THE REALITY CONSISTS OF MASSIVE VIOLATIONS ON EVERY FRONT--SOME COMMON TO MOST AUTHORITARIAN STATES, OTHERS PECULIAR TO BURUNDI. YET THERE IS STILL HOPE IN THE PRESENCE OF A FACTION OF RATIONAL AND MORE WESTERNIZED MODERATE TUTSIS IN RULING CIRCLES AND IN THE PROSPECT THAT WIDENING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES CAN BE DISPERSED TO THE SOCIETY AT LARGE THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF RECENTLY DISCOVERED NICKEL AND OTHER MINERAL DEPOSITS.

8. THE USG THROUGH ITS ABILITY TO INFLUENCE POTENTIAL INVESTORS POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY, AND THROUGH PERSISTENT IF DISCREET DIPLOMACY, CAN PUSH FOR SOCIAL REFORMS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THAT WILL GRADUALLY REACH OUT TO THE WHOLE POPULATION. THE BASIC THEME WILL BE TO WIN ACCEPTANCE FOR THE IDEA THAT RECONCILIATION IS IN EVERYONE'S INTEREST, NATIVE AND FOREIGNER ALIKE. THROUGH THE START OF SOME MODEST AID PROJECTS IN THE AGRICULTURAL AND HEALTH FIELDS, THE USG WILL HAVE ENHANCED ACCESS TO BURUNDI OFFICIALDOM TO GET ITS POINTS ACROSS, WHILE IT ALSO FULFILLS ANOTHER HUMANITARIAN DUTY OF CONTRIBUTING TO THE GENERAL IMPROVEMENT OF ONE THE OF THE POOREST OF THE POOR COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD. THE U.S., HOWEVER, SHOULD NOT WORK ALONE. AMERICAN EFFORTS WILL BE MORE EFFECTIVE IF COMPLEMENTED BY A SUSTAINED INTERNATIONAL PUSH BY VARIOUS WORLD ORGANIZATIONS, BY OTHER

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GOVERNMENTS, AND BY PRIVATE INVESTMENT GROUPS, ALL FOCUSING ON THE NEED TO KEEP INJUSTICE IN BURUNDI QUIETLY IN PEOPLE'S MINDS AND TO KEEP AFTER THE BURUNDI AUTHORITIES TO MAKE STEADY PROGRESS TOWARD ETHNIC REINTEGRATION AND POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC EQUALITY AT HOME.

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